Procurement of foodgrains

*42. MISS MABEL REBELLO : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that monopolization of procurement of foodgrains by Central and State agencies has institutionalized inefficiency;

(b) if so, what measures Government plan to take to reduce inefficiency in this sector; and

(c) to what extent the consumers would be benefited from these measures?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Under the Government Policy on procurement of foodgrains, the private sector is also free to procure foodgrains from the farmers at or above the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The Government announces the MSP for the farmers every crop year so as to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers, prevent distress sale and to have sufficient buffer stocks for a sound Public Distribution System (PDS). Farmers have the freedom to offer their produce to public or private agencies. The participation of Government agencies in the procurement of foodgrains has, over the years, led to the successful implementation of the MSP operations in the country.

(b) To further improve efficiency in the procurement operations by Government agencies, a number of measures have been taken, which, *inter-alia*, aim at reducing the carrying cot of foodgrains, including the transit losses.

(c) The Central Issue Price of foodgrains for BPL families has remained unchanged since July, 2000 and the consumers under the BPL and Antyodaya Anna Yojana are getting foodgrains at pre-determined subsidized prices only.

Controversy over location of UCIL

*43. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Environmental clearance has been obtained for the location of Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether there is a controversy over the location of the Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. (UCIL) in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reasons for people agitating on dangers of the proposed Uranium project; and

(e) by when the project would be functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) As part of the process of obtaining Environmental clearance, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) have been prepared for the project. These have been discussed in "Public Hearings" held in Nalgonda District, during August 2003. Various perceptions and view points were placed by the people during the hearings.

(e) The project would commence only after obtaining all requisite statutory clearances including Environmental clearance.

National Policy for Voluntary Organisations

†*44. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to formulate a National policy for voluntary organisations so that these organisations become self-dependent and improve their economy condition by donation and other means;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the policy in this regard is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Government has decided to formulate a National Policy for Voluntary Sector to strengthen

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.